

Pleasant Hill Library Task Force Meeting Notes

Meeting Date: April 7, 2014

Large Community Room, Pleasant Hill City Hall, 100 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill, CA 94523

Attendees:

- Karen Mitchoff, Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors
- Michael Harris, Pleasant Hill City Council
- Jack Weir, Pleasant Hill City Council
- Dr. Nellie Meyer, MDUSD Superintendent
- Cathy Sanford, Contra Costa County Library
- Jessica Hudson, Contra Costa County Library
- Lisa Chow, Supervisor Mitchoff's Office
- Sandra Bonato, PH Recreation & Park District Board
- Jack Prosek, Pleasant Hill Library Fund
- Brian Crowell, Friends of Pleasant Hill Library
- Katherine Bracken, CCC Library Commission
- Sherry Sterrett, PH Recreation & Park District Board
- June Catalano, City Manager
- Bob Stewart, City staff
- Martin Nelis, City staff

Introductions – the attendees made self-introductions and indicated which organization they were representing.

Nomination of Chair & Vice Chair - Katherine Bracken nominated Councilmember Harris and Supervisor Mitchoff as Chair and Vice-Chair respectively. The members present voted unanimously in favor of this nomination.

Mission and Scope of the Task Force:

Chair Harris opened the discussion and asked for comments on the mission of the Task Force (TF) and posed the question what do we want to accomplish as a task force.

Councilmember Weir asked if County Library Administration would be part of any new library. Sup. Mitchoff replied that the plan at this point was to relocate library administration to a different location if a new building was constructed in Pleasant Hill.

Councilmember Weir posed the question is it our task not only to try to build a new facility but also to find funding for operational costs of a new building. Sup. Mitchoff explained that the County pays for library operations at a base level of 35 hours per week. Anything above that including building maintenance would require additional funds from the City.

Jack Prosek stated that the PH Historical Society was interested in having a possible presence in a new library building and suggested a community theater as another possibility of a joint use of

the building. He expressed surprise that library administration was not being considered as part of a possible joint project with the county. Councilmembers Harris and Weir suggested that a joint partnership with the County including library administration should be kept as one possible option at this point in the process. Councilmember Harris stated that we should be inclusive rather than exclusive for now.

Supervisor Mitchoff suggested that the TF consider other needs beyond just books and resources of a traditional library – that the TF look at what we need/want and design would follow from that. She liked the idea of a reading room or ‘fireside chat room’, and suggested scheduling a field trip to see other libraries that have been constructed over the past few years.

County Librarian, Jessica Hudson, suggested asking residents what they want in a new library. Brian Crowell suggested establishing a wish list based on feedback from the community.

Sandy Bonato stated that having design renderings of the Rec & Park District projects helped to get community support for their bond measure and this should be considered by the TF as it moves forward.

Sherry Sterrett stated that the TF needed to get buy in from community. The TF must conduct a needs assessment and determine the cost associated with meeting those needs. A lot of questions must be answered before we get to point of the actual design of the building.

Sup. Mitchoff stated that time is of the essence because the County is looking at several properties one of which could be considered as future site of a new library. Also, there are pressing deferred maintenance needs for the current building in excess of \$10m and the County is reluctant to spend that amount of money on an outdated building.

Dr. Nellie Meyer suggested that a gap analysis is critical to any needs assessment that should be conducted. She stated that we want something that is unique and not what we already have; that we need to look to future technology and plan for the younger generation and how they might use the facility.

Councilmember Harris suggested that the mission of the TF is broad and that we should be looking at a community library plus theater, reading rooms, study rooms, child areas, cafe etc. – that we shouldn’t limit the possibilities and possibly include library admin services.

Councilmember Weir suggested that based on what he was hearing that we should consider changing the name to "PH Library and “something else” Task Force (such as ‘Cultural Center’) to include the ideas coming forth from the TF members.

Councilmember Harris asked what would be the “Work Product” of the TF?

Brian Crowell suggested that as representative of the Friends of the PH Library, he could solicit opinion from its members as to what they feel should be incorporated into a new library facility.

Sup. Mitchoff suggested that there could be a role for the MDUSD to play in any future project as a possible joint use facility. Dr. Meyer stated that she would be interested in looking at existing joint use models that have worked.

Assumptions

Councilmember Harris asked what assumptions can be made at this point.

He asked if everyone was in agreement that there was no desire to renovate the current library building. Another assumption is that the TF can rally the support of the community behind the project if residents are properly informed and educated.

Sup. Mitchoff stated that we need to educate residents better about our revenue limitations and why we need to have a bond measure - educate them more on the budget process.

Councilmember Weir stated that we should assume it will not be an easy sell and that we need to characterize it to the voters as something that makes good economic sense.

Sandra Bonato asked can we assume voters will support a library at the south end of the city. She also pointed out that any bond measure needs to support construction and furnishings.

Brian Crowell asked if there was a broader economic plan for the development of the County owned properties. City Manager June Catalano responded that the County and Flood Control District owned three properties – the current library site, the former Oak Park Elementary school 10-acre site and the Beatrice Road Site (Flood Control District). The combined 10-acre and library site (4.7 acres) could be a residential development and the Beatrice Road site could be a future library site. She indicated that a residential development does not bring revenue into the city in comparison to commercial development.

Sherry Sterrett stated that there should be a question in the needs assessment such as how much will the public support paying per assessed valuation in a bond measure. She also mentioned that she does not think the seniors will support the library project and suggested waiting five years before floating a bond measure.

Councilmember Weir stated that we should appeal to seniors to get their support, and that we should come up with questions to take to a pollster so that we can test the waters now and not wait five years.

Establishment of Subcommittees

Michael invited TF members to serve on various subcommittees. Brian Crowell asked if non-members of the TF could also serve on subcommittees. The TF agreed to permit others to serve on the sub-committees.

The following subcommittees were established:

1. **Community Outreach** – Members: Brian Crowell, Councilmember Weir, Lisa Chow, and Patrick Remer.

Cathy Sanford commented that the library had conducted 200 interviews with various community members as part of its Strategic Plan process and they could make the results of this survey available to the subcommittee as well as the Library Strategic Plan document.

2. **Needs Assessment** – Members: Councilmember Harris, Katherine Bracken, Jack Prosek, Sandra Bonato and Jeff McDaniels (MDUSD).

Councilmember Harris asked staff to send the “2003 Needs Assessment and Preliminary Site Analysis” document to the TF members. He suggested that this subcommittee review the document again. Supervisor Mitchoff indicated that the 2007 County report on deferred maintenance needs would be made available to the sub-committee also.

3. **Funding** – Members: Jessica Hudson, Councilmember Weir, and Katherine Bracken.

Reference was made to the Library Bond Act at the state level proposed by Senator Mark DeSaulnier. Cathy Sanford stated that this statewide bond measure was being put off for voter approval until November 2016. Councilmember Weir suggested that the TF should not rely on any outside or state funding for this project and work on the assumption that we need a 30-year bond measure.

Chair Harris asked each of the subcommittees to meet prior to the next meeting of the TF. It was agreed to wait until the three subcommittees report back before trying to draft a timeline for project phasing.

Sherry Sterrett thought that the TF should set project timelines now rather than wait for the next meeting in June.

The TF agreed to hold the next meeting on June 9th at 11:00 a.m. in the large Community Room at City Hall. The meeting adjourned at 12:30 p.m.